

## **Section 5 Coroner/Medical Examiner Main Elements**

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**Person attempted suicide after incident: Suic****Name      Definition**

Suic	Suspect attempted (or completed) suicide during the incident
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**Uses**

Although the incident-based nature of NVDRS enables researchers to identify cases involving murder/suicide, there may be a scenario when a suspect injures himself but survives. This data element, therefore enables researchers to capture the range of murder/suicide and murder/attempted suicide incidents. Murder/suicides are a violence subtype prominent in cases of intimate partner violence and mass public shootings.

**Discussion**

This variable is suspect specific. Code as “yes” if a suspect attempted (or completed) suicide during the incident.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Suic	Person attempted suicide after incident:	Person	Checkbox	1	LR/LR	CME/PR

**Response Options:**

Suic

0 No, Not Collected, Not Available, Unknown

1 Yes

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

NVISS

**Date of death: DthDt**  
**Manner of death: Manner**  
**Place of death: Dthplace**  
**Place of death if other: PDthTx**  
**State of death: DthState**  
**Street and number of injury site: InjAddres**  
**City of injury FIPS code: InjPlace**  
**State of injury FIPS code: InjState**  
**Injured at work: AtWork**  
**Type of location where injured: LocTyp**  
**Time of injury: ITime**  
**Date of injury: Date**  
**Survival time no. of units: Surviv**  
**Unit of time used in survival time: SUnit**  
**Birth place: BthPlc**  
**Birth place text: BthTxt**  
**Marital status: MarStat**  
**Person was pregnant: Preg**  
**Education : Educ**  
**Autopsy performed: Autpsy**  
**Number of wounds: NumWou**  
**Number of bullets that hit victim: NumBul**  
**Wound to the head: Head**  
**Wound to the face: Face**  
**Wound to the neck: Neck**  
**Wound to the upper extremity: UpExt**  
**Wound to the spine: Spine**  
**Wound to the thorax: Thorax**  
**Wound to the abdomen: Abdomn**  
**Wound to the lower extremity: LowExt**

*See Person/DC/Main Elements section for information regarding variables appearing above.*

**ZIP code of injury: Zip**  
**County of injury: County**

Name	Definition.
Zip	Zip code in which injury occurred
County	County in which injury occurred (FIPS code)

**Uses**

The address of the incident is used to determine the agency responsible for potential public health interventions; to gain information about the socioeconomic status (SES) of the neighborhoods in which injuries occur (via U.S. Census data); to map incidents; and to conduct analyses of the case distribution by SES and geographic area. See the Introduction section of this manual for a discussion about handling variables that can identify individual persons or agencies.

**Discussion**

The county is coded using standard Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) codes. States are being provided with a hard-copy code list of county codes. For out-of-state addresses, or as an alternative to manually searching for codes, the following website will supply FIPS county codes: <http://geonames.usgs.gov/fips55.html>.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Zip	ZIP code of injury:	Person	Number	5	O/O	CME/PR
County	County of injury:	Person	Number	3	O/O	CME/PR

**Response Options:**

Zip  
County

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS); National Institute of Standards and Technologies; U.S. Postal Service

**At person's home: Reside****Name      Definition.**

Reside	Incident occurred at the person's residence
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**Uses**

Data about whether the incident occurred in the person's residence can be used to further characterize the injury incident, and may be valuable for planning and evaluating injury prevention programs. It can be used, for example, to evaluate the impact of laws or policies regulating the use of firearms in public versus private locations, or to inform domestic violence interventions.

**Discussion**

This variable is completed for each victim in an incident and is person-specific. For example, if a man shot his wife and his wife's sister at the sister's house, Reside is "no" for the wife, but "yes" for the sister.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Reside	At person's home:	Person	Number	1	LR/LR	CME/PR

**Response Options:**

Reside

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

NVISS

**EMS at scene: EMS**

Name	Definition
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EMS	Were emergency medical services present at the scene of the injury incident?
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**Uses**

EMS status can be used to describe the involvement of emergency medical services in violent injury cases. This may assist in planning and evaluating EMS services and in capturing costs associated with violence.

**Discussion**

Code only to indicate the presence of EMS at the scene, not to indicate whether any medical services were delivered.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
EMS	EMS at scene:	Person	Number	1	O/O	CME/PR

**Response Options:****EMS**

- 0 No, EMS not at scene
- 1 Yes, EMS at scene
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

NVISS

**Homeless status: Homles**

Name	Definition
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Homles	Was person homeless at the time of the incident?
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**Uses**

This variable helps to describe how frequently the homeless are victims of violence.

**Discussion**

Homeless is defined here as having no fixed address and living in a shelter, on the street, in a car, or in makeshift quarters in an outdoor setting. A person who has no home of their own, but is staying indefinitely with friends or family is not considered homeless here.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Homles	Homeless status:	Person	Number	1	O/O	CME/PR

**Response Options:**

Homles

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

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**Current occupation: Occup**

Name	Definition
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Occup	Victim's employment status, and, if employed, current occupation
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**Uses**

Employment status and occupation are indicators of socioeconomic status. Certain occupations may also be associated with an increased risk of suicide or homicide.

**Discussion**

Report the occupation in a text field exactly as it appears on the CME report or other report. The information can later be coded at the national level using standard SOC classifications. Note that "current occupation" is different from "usual occupation", which is recorded on the death certificate. If the person is not employed, enter one of the standard text options listed below. These are not currently available on a drop-down menu, so please be careful to enter them exactly as they appear below and not in an abbreviated version. People who work 17.5 hours or more per week are considered employed; people who work less than that are not.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Occup	Current occupation:	Person	Text	50	O/O	CME/PR

**Response Options:****Occup**

*Enter person's current occupation in free text, or enter:*

- Unemployed
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Student
- Disabled
- NA (under age 14)
- Unknown

**Victim in custody when injured: Custody****Name      Definition**

Custody	Person was in public custody when injury occurred
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**Uses**

Violent injuries that occur while a victim is in public custody are an issue of public concern and a potential indicator of systemic problems that require change.

**Discussion**

A person is in public custody if they are under arrest, in foster care, or remanded by law to an institution, such as a jail, prison, detention center, psychiatric ward, psychiatric hospital, or other institution. Custody is coded on the basis of when the injury was inflicted or when the death occurred. If the injury was inflicted while the person was not in custody, but they died in custody, code Custody as “yes”. An example of such a scenario is a robber who is shot by a storeowner, arrested, and dies two days later from the shooting. The code “Committed to mental hospital or ward” covers involuntary commitments and involuntary observations at psychiatric wards within standard hospitals or at psychiatric institutions. People who voluntarily commit themselves should not be coded as in custody. The code “In jail or prison” also covers incarcerations in juvenile detention facilities and other detention facilities.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Custody	Victim in custody when injured:	Person	Number	1	O/O	PR/CME

**Response Options:****Custody**

- 1 In jail or prison
- 2 Under arrest but not in jail
- 3 Committed to mental hospital
- 4 Resident of other state institution
- 5 In foster care
- 7 Not in custody
- 9 Unknown

**Date specimens were collected: SpcDt****Time specimens were collected: SpcTme**

Name	Definition
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SpcDt	Date on which body specimens were collected for toxicologic screen
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SpcTme	Time at which body specimens were collected for toxicologic screen
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**Uses**

Date and time of collection of body specimens, in conjunction with date and time of death and injury, can be used to assess the validity of alcohol and drug testing results and the possible contribution of drugs or alcohol to the injury. For example, blood specimens drawn long after death will not accurately reflect intoxication level at the time of death.

**Discussion**

Time is in the military time format HHMM. For example, if blood was drawn at 10:30 p.m., code as 2230; code midnight as 0000. See the Introduction section of this manual for a discussion about handling variables that can identify individual persons or agencies.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
SpcDt	Date specimens were collected:	Person	Text	10	LR	CME
SpcTme	Time specimens were collected:	Person	Text	5	LR	CME

**Response Options:****SpcDt**

MM/DD/YYYY	Date specimens were collected
88/88/8888	Not applicable (no specimens collected)
99/99/9999	Unknown

**SpcTme**

0000...2359	Military time
7777	Not collected by reporting site
8888	Not applicable
9999	Unknown

**Intoxication suspected: Intox****Name      Definition**

Intox	Victim's suspected alcohol use in the hours preceding the incident
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**Uses**

This variable can be used to explore the role of alcohol use among victims of violent death. The other alcohol variables (AlchRs and BAC) summarize results from toxicology tests conducted as part of the death investigation. This variable uses a broader definition of suspected alcohol use to capture information. It should be noted, however, that because circumstantial evidence is considered sufficient for coding "suspected alcohol use," there will be some false positives.

**Discussion**

"Intox" can be coded as "yes" based on test results (e.g., CME report, hospital test, police breathalyzer), witness or investigator reports (e.g., police note that the victim "had been drinking heavily"), or circumstantial evidence (e.g., empty six pack scattered around suicide victim). This variable refers only to alcohol use and not drug use. Therefore, if a person was said to have been smoking crack on the day of the incident, but they tested negative for alcohol and there is no evidence that they were drinking, "Intox" should be coded as "no". The phrase "in the hours preceding the incident" can be interpreted relatively broadly. For example, if friends report that a suicide victim was drinking heavily at a party and returned home that evening and killed himself sometime later that night, "Intox" should be coded as "yes".

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
Intox	Intoxication suspected:	Person	Number	1	LR/LR	CME/PR

**Response Options:**

Intox

- 0 No
- 1 Yes
- 8 Not Applicable
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

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**Blood alcohol concentration results: BAC**

Name	Definition
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BAC	Blood alcohol level
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**Uses**

This variable enables researchers to categorize victims by blood alcohol level. These data will assist in exploring the relationship between alcohol intoxication and violent death when interpreted in conjunction with data on time of injury, time of death, and time at which body specimens were drawn.

**Discussion**

Blood alcohol levels are coded in terms of percent by volume (serum %). Percent by volume equals the milligrams of alcohol found per deciliter of blood (mg/dl) divided by 1000. For example, a level of 30 mg/dl would be 0.03% alcohol. How labs report blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) varies. Many use the format used here (serum %), while others report BAC as milligrams of alcohol per deciliter of blood (mg/dl)—as in 30 mg/dl. To convert mg/dl results to serum % results, divide by 1,000. Only BAC levels should be entered here; levels based on other body fluids such as vitreous fluid should not. Use caution when interpreting BAC levels because variation in the time elapsed between ingestion of substances, time of death, and time of drawing body specimens for toxicological analysis will affect the outcome.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
BAC	Blood alcohol concentration results:	Person	Number	4	LR	CME

**Response Options:**

BAC

0.88 Not applicable, no testing

0.99 Unknown

Format: 0.##

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

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## Testing for alcohol: AlchTs

### Alcohol test results: AlchRs

Name	Definition
AlchTs	Victim's blood was tested for presence of alcohol
AlchRs	Results of blood alcohol test

#### Uses

Alcohol intoxication is a risk factor in many types of injury deaths. Identifying victims for whom objective evidence of alcohol ingestion exists will be useful to those researchers exploring the role of alcohol in violent injury.

#### Discussion

Coding should be based on toxicologic screening of blood samples conducted as part of the CME's investigation. Breathalyzer or hospital-based test results should not be reflected in this variable, nor should results based on urine specimens. This information will be most useful in jurisdictions that routinely analyze blood alcohol levels in victims of homicide and/or suicide, as opposed to those that only sporadically do so.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
AlchTs	Testing for alcohol:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
AlchRs	Alcohol test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME

#### Response Options:

##### AlchTs

- 1 Tested
- 2 Not tested
- 9 Unknown

##### AlchRs

- 1 Present
- 2 Not present
- 9 Unknown

#### Data Standards or Guidelines

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## TOXICOLOGY TESTING

**Testing for amphetamines: AmphTs**

**Testing for antidepressants: AntiTs**

**Testing for cocaine: CokeTs**

**Testing for marijuana: MarjTs**

**Testing for opiate(s): OpiaTs**

**Testing for other drugs: OtDrTs**

Name	Definition
AmphTs	Toxicologic screening for amphetamines conducted
AntiTs	Toxicologic screening for antidepressants conducted
CokeTs	Toxicologic screening for cocaine conducted
MarjTs	Toxicologic screening for marijuana conducted
OpiaTs	Toxicologic screening for opiate(s) conducted
OtDrTs	Toxicologic screening for other drugs conducted

### Uses

This set of variables identifies victims whose bodily fluids were tested during the death investigation for drugs.

### Discussion

These variables indicate whether the victim's blood, urine, vitreous humor (ocular fluid), bile, or other tissues were tested for a variety of drugs or their metabolites by any standard toxicologic screening method.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
AmphTs	Testing for amphetamines: Person		Number	1	LR	CME
AntiTs	Testing for antidepressants: Person		Number	1	LR	CME
CokeTs	Testing for cocaine:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
MarjTs	Testing for marijuana:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
OpiaTs	Testing for opiate(s):	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
OtDrTs	Testing for other drugs:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME

**Response Options:**

AmphTs through OtDrTs

- 1 Tested
- 2 Not tested
- 9 Unknown

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

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## TOXICOLOGY RESULTS

**Amphetamine test results: AmphRs**

**Antidepressant test results: AntiRs**

**Cocaine test results: CokeRs**

**Marijuana test results: MarjRs**

**Opiate test results: OpiaRs**

**Other drug test results: OtDrRs**

**Type of other drug: OthDrg**

Name	Definition
AmphRs	Amphetamines test results
AntiRs	Antidepressants test results
CokeRs	Cocaine test results
MarjRs	Marijuana test results
OpiaRs	Opiate test results
OtDrRs	Other drug test results
OthDrg	Type of drug for which person tested positive

### Uses

This set of variables identifies whether the tests for various drugs or their metabolites were positive or negative. Findings can assist in exploring the relationship between recreational drug use and violent death. The variables can also be used to document the presence of certain psychiatric medications among suicide victims in jurisdictions that test for these substances. The drug variables will be most useful in jurisdictions that routinely run toxicology tests on victims, as opposed to those that only sporadically do so.

### Discussion

Drug test results can be coded based on results from any body fluid; it is not restricted to blood only, as is the case for reporting blood alcohol levels. Many labs report test results by reporting both the specific substance that a person tested positive for and the class that the substance falls under. Some, however, report only the substance. In those cases, use the drug list provided in the training manual to identify which broad categories the substance falls under. The drug test result variables can be coded as “yes” if the lab report or CME summary notes the substance as “positive,” “presumptive presence,” or having a numeric level greater than 0. If there is testing for a drug that does not fall into any of these categories, code “other” and record the name of the drug in “Type of other drug”.

Name	Label	Table	Type	Field length	Priority	Primacy
AmphRs	Amphetamine test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
AntiRs	Antidepressant test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
CokeRs	Cocaine test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
MarjRs	Marijuana test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
OpiaRs	Opiate test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
OtDrRs	Other drug test results:	Person	Number	1	LR	CME
OthDrg	Type of other drug:	Person	Text	50	LR	CME

**Response Options:**

AmphRs through OtDrRs

- 1 Present
- 2 Not present
- 8 Not applicable
- 9 Unknown

OthDrg

**Data Standards or Guidelines**

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